

MY IDEALS OF RELIGION

School of Theology at Claremont



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BY

WALTER J. CAREY,

Author of "A Book of Instruction for Church People."

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BY

WALTER J. CAREY, M.A., R.N.

LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO.

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1917

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SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
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I DEDICATE THIS BOOK
TO MY TRUE FRIENDS IN THE "WARSPITE"

WALTER LEEKE, LT.-COMMANDER
MR. WARREN, BOATSWAIN
H. WEIGHTMAN, STOKER PETTY-OFFICER
DAVID HEAD, LEADING SEAMAN
JOHN COLLINS, A.B.
CHARLES STENTIFORD, L.T.O.

THAN WHOM NO MAN EVER HAD BETTER FRIENDS
AND NO PRIEST MORE LOYAL AND ENTHUSIASTIC HELPERS
AND SUPPORTERS
IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF A CHURCH
MAY GOD BLESS THEM

PREFACE

MY publishers, who I am glad to say are also my critics and my friends, suggested to me that I ought to write a companion book to "My Priesthood," which should be written for the laity.

I wrote "My Priesthood" for young clergy or would-be clergy in order to show them from my own experiences—some happy, some bitter—that the priesthood could be a fine thing but needed a professional efficiency, not a dilatory amateurism.

And in these strenuous days of organising the nation's life for the purposes of war, it becomes clearer than ever that dilatoriness and slovenly thinking or work is a sin both in Church and State, and a priest needs to have clear-cut teaching to give, and a definite effect and character which he aims to produce. At the moment I write (January, 1917) there is nothing less than a sigh of relief from everybody at the prospect of greater definiteness and energy in the prosecution of the war. People feel that old-established precedents and customs must yield to the pressure of a clear and masculine directness of purpose and will. So it is in the Church. We must be born again. Our leaders must rise above a "wait and see" opportunism.

They are awaking or awake already : we must back them up. And we can't afford to send sloppy well-meaning priests to our parishes. They must know their job, they must know human nature, they must know the groundwork of their confidence and faith.

Bishops for large measures of Church reform as well as for the superintendence of their dioceses : priests for the conversion of their flocks and the edification of their locality—physically and spiritually. That's the programme. So I hope that " My Priesthood " may still be useful in its endeavour to help priests to think out their own mental and spiritual purpose on entering their parishes.

But I should also like to speak to the " men of goodwill " among the laity, and put the Christian religion to them simply. Sometimes I wonder what right I have to speak to them. I think my only right is that I have found, to my great happiness, that I have been of some use to some souls. I don't think I am the least use to confirmed " men of the world " ; they think I am a dreamer, and I think they are incredibly dull and prosaic. I think one of my dreams is so much better than all their sordid achievements. They seem to me so selfish, and however selfish I am myself, still I hate selfishness—in myself or anyone else. The " man about Town " with his attitude to women inspires absolute loathing in me. I might fall, as better men than I have fallen, but I should loathe myself and never defend it. The claim to sacrifice

womanhood to man's passing desires, or the claim to treat anybody as a mere machine, is so repellent to me that I find it difficult to be civil. So I reckon I am useless to such. Nor am I much use to the temperamentally very pious person. They often lack humour and they don't recognise the difficulties and temptations of the ordinary "knock-about" person. It is difficult to keep straight, it is hard to believe "all the articles of the Christian faith."

But there is an enormous class whom I do really and literally love. It is the class of men and women who deny neither God nor their conscience. Their intention is to do right but they are so confused. Their ideas of religion are befogged by wretched teaching: God is the Big Man and that is all. Religion is knowledge of some Bible facts: Moses, St. Paul, miracles. Conscience is hard-pressed or occasionally overcome by the pressure of sex or the longing to see "life," which presents itself as more attractive in Leicester Square than at Aunt Jemima's house in Balham where they go to church three times on Sunday and have high tea.

I see such magnificent material in the Navy, both among officers and on the lower-deck. Men who could be, and are, the finest men and the finest Christians in the world. I see them at their work: I watch a flotilla of destroyers as they guard us from submarine attack, perhaps in the height of a gale.

Up go the bows and the boat seems to be settling by the stern: then down she goes, burying her entire

bows in a wave which covers the bridge and flings the spray clear over the funnels. Two days later I see them at a boxing match or a theatrical show, cheery and careless, full of natural health and spirits, ready equally for fun or battle, taking life and death in their stride.

And I think what brutes we clergy are with our sheltered lives and our introspective habits and our nasty controversies, and while I am paying a heartfelt and humble tribute to Naval gaiety and valour I am thinking how gladly I would die with a "nunc dimittis" if they were one and all the friends and servants of Jesus Christ.

Then there are the undergraduates I knew and loved in that magic city of Oxford. They lacked the hourly contact with danger which makes a sailor so delightful to a landsman. But their affectionateness and cleanness of life : their honest endeavours to think through things : their unselfishness and good manners : their trick of making you entirely at home although you were twice their age, all these gifts made you long to put religion before them in such a way that by learning the secret of religion, by partaking of the hidden power and joy that comes from contact with Christ, they might make their marvellous gifts and graces immortal.

Then there are women I have known. None of us men really understands a woman, but there are some of whom I can only say that contact with them makes

us good and wholesome men. They are so real and so thorough. They make womanhood sacred. It is they who make us gnash our teeth over prostitution : that sisters of theirs should be told off to serve the vices of the vicious, while the world says that it must always be so. Must it ? I look to women to solve that question since men have muddled it.

It is these classes then that I love : the ordinary attractive folk of whom God has made so many. Sailors who look like old sea-kings who have stepped out of the times of Harold Hardrada, whoever he was : university men with their affection and charm : women whom we honour because they are so straight : just ordinary people for whom Christ died and whom He loves, not specially clever, not widely known, coming from ordinary homes, the rank and file of British manhood and womanhood ; these are the folk I honour and love and would serve. I simply cannot bear to see their magnificent endowments frittered away in selfishness or vulgarity : I hate to think of their faces and eyes dimmed by worldliness or self-indulgence or casual lusts. I believe that their great safeguard, and the main guarantee of a splendid and useful manhood and womanhood, is a true and noble religion. Therefore I would humbly try to put it to them. I leave aside philosophers : they must go to wiser teachers or learn by their own experience that brains alone will never give you " youth and health and paradise." I leave behind the confirmed " man of

the world ” ; suffering and disillusionment must be your expensive tutors.

But to men of goodwill : sailors, soldiers, undergraduates, miners, clerks, labourers—men who are tempted as I am, have sinned as I have, wish to rise again to better things as I do, to these I want to unfold the trials, the difficulties, the stumbles, the recoveries, the joys, the splendours, the adventures of the true religion of Jesus Christ.

It will not be a religion which simply aims at saving your soul. You must almost forget your soul in your work for God. It will not be a religion of much church-going : for you have little time for church.

It is an adventure. God claims you for His work, as England has already claimed you for hers. Her work is part of His, but His is bigger and wider.

He is out, not merely to conquer Germany, or rather Germany's oppressive and awful spirit of domination, but to conquer England's sins as well.

He wants a new Empire on earth, the kingdom of Christ, and He wants you as the Empire-builders.

It is an incredibly difficult Empire to build, because it is perfect. You have the Scylla of mere pietism and smug self-righteousness on one side, and the Charybdis of mere natural and attractive paganism on the other.

The Kingdom of Christ must be righteous and holy, and yet winning and virile.

Can you do it, and will you do it ? And if you are willing to give it a favourable consideration, may I

give you the grounds on which you may base your start ?

I cannot take you far. When you have learnt to walk you will take wings and fly where I cannot follow you but only look up and admire. But perhaps I can teach you to walk ; anyhow I would like to try.

P.S.—As I find that some people write to me about my books, perhaps I might add that I am now at the Royal Naval Barracks, Chatham, for a spell. The book was written in the *Warspite* in the atmosphere of sea routine and sea life, and I finished my time in her just after the book was completed.

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MY IDEALS OF RELIGION

CHAPTER I

THE GROUNDS OF OUR BELIEF

I HAVE often asked myself, "On what grounds do I believe what I teach other people?" And it is a fair question. For after all we have never seen God nor even the material wonderful works which Christ and His Apostles did. "Is it possible," I say to myself, "that it's all a fairy story, with nothing solid in it, but only a fancy and a dream?"

Yet I have no doubts myself. After all, this sort of life we live here doesn't encourage fairy stories. One never knows how long one may be alive, and the shells that got my cabin and my church last time may get me next time. Is it a time to depend upon legends? So I drop thinking about arguments used by other people: I drop the teleological and ontological and all the other logical arguments and simply say, "Why do I believe?" And my honest answer would be this. I partly believe because I have been overwhelmingly conscious three times in my life of spiritual forces at work in me. I believe these things are called

conversion by some people : when one is conscious of a light in the soul and feels an absolutely irresistible drawing to Someone. And the surrender of oneself to God and His will, although it involves a new and strange obedience to conscience and a big struggle with bad habits and sins, is yet accompanied by such overwhelming happiness and satisfaction as to be finally and conclusively convincing.

I suppose this is a special sort of conversion given to certain people either because God has a particular bit of work for them to do, or because they are so bad that they would be lost without it.

I wish everybody had the experience : it would save a lot of argument and make so many books unnecessary, but I suppose God means most people to come to Himself by the ordinary roads of duty done and conscience obeyed. I am quite sure it is not necessary for everybody : conversion to me means conversion of the will ; a whole-hearted acceptance of God's pardon and grace in and through Christ, and a resolute determination to be true to God. Once again, I hate bringing in this personal experience, but I don't see how I can be honest and leave it out. It stands to reason that when I ask myself " Why do I believe ? " this vivid and unexpected revelation of twenty-four years ago—which lasted most luminously and vividly for nine months, and endures still—is bound to bulk largely in my own mind and heart.

I dare say some people would tell me that I had no right to let this experience of mine take such a large place in my confidence. They would say, " It is probably only an individual fancy born of adolescence," and so on. Yet I don't know. If you had once

genuinely fallen in love and afterwards found out that you were the only person in the world who had ever done so, which would you doubt? Would you doubt yourself, or the world? I reckon I should pity and doubt the world. Your experience would be so vivid and joyful and in the truest sense real, and the ordinary lovelessness and incoherence of the world would seem so unsatisfying that I expect you would say that, unique though it was, you had rather doubt the world's lovelessness than the truth of your own love.

And I must confess the same. If every other person in the world says that religion is untrue: if the great name of Science were wrongly invoked to contradict or explain away religion, and the attempt was successful and the world were atheist, I should still go to my grave not only confident but laughing. I have grave doubts of my fidelity to religion: I am often miserable over the irreligion and wretchedness in the world. But, right or wrong, I have no doubts as to religion. There is a God and He can and does reveal Himself to human hearts. That I know, and so do a good many others. I am sorry if I appear merely mystical or individualistic or obscurantist. I cannot help it: I have felt.

But please do not think that this is the whole of my argument, even for myself. It is only as if a green shoot appearing above the mould proved to me that there is a bulb below. If I care to dig down I shall find the bulb all right. If you dig into yourself you will find the roots also: at present it is only that my shoots came up before yours; God brought them out before I was aware that any roots existed. What I want to show you is that there are roots in you too:

the best sort of roots you've got, and that it is your duty and happiness to bring them to flower and perfection.

Now, to drop these agricultural metaphors, let me enquire as to the reason why I believe that religion is real and true for everybody, whether they have felt any religious experience or not.

It is because I find in most men, in practically all men, three instincts :

(1) An instinct for God.

(2) An instinct for goodness.

(3) An instinct for immortality.

I know again that if this book is read at Oxford there will be those who point to that man or that tribe and say that these instincts are intermittent and partial. Others will say that "instinct" is the wrong word. Conscience is "moral reason" and all that.

But I say that for the mass of mankind, for the generality of human beings, they will perfectly understand what I mean. That they can't help believing in some kind of God : that they do know the difference between good and evil to a large extent : and that they do anticipate a life beyond this life. Philosophers may cavil and criticise, but, as far as my experience goes, these three basal instincts or habits of mind are common to the vast majority of men : and those who do not have them are on the whole as negligible as colour-blind people. And if at this point I shed some of my readers I do not care : I proceed with the rest, with the majority of human beings.

Now what are you going to make of these three instincts ? Are they a fairy-tale ? Are they invented by parsons ? Can you expel them if you try ? They are

as solid mental or psychological facts as submarines lurking round a harbour's mouth are physical facts.

You ignore either at your peril. If you suppress these instincts they break out somewhere. "*Naturam furca expellas tamen usque redibit*," and if you stop the wholesome exits of religion towards worship and morality, the suppressed instincts will break out into senseless superstition. I see by the papers (if they are to be trusted) that vast numbers of our very gallant soldiers—whose religious instincts have been suppressed by the failure of the Church to teach (or to be allowed to teach) real religion—are putting their trust in mascots or buttons or monkeys carved out of wood. Actresses present charms to regiments and doctors (so the papers say) comment on the wonderful faith of the men in their life-saving mascot. What does this childish and idolatrous tomfoolery mean? Personally I'd sooner be decently dead than owe my life to a monkey carved on a stick and turned out by the thousand (no doubt at an excellent profit) by some enterprising tradesman.

How can heroes be so silly? Have we got to the state when we exchange the protection of the Lord God of hosts in whose name Drake and Nelson, Cromwell and Collingwood, led to victory our fighting men of old, for the "joss" and the charm, and the magic image? It makes one blush to think that we have got to go back to the second Commandment and the crushing sarcasms of Isaiah against idol-worship, which we thought were needless in the year of our Lord 1917!

And what does it all mean? It means that men

have tried to thwart and suppress the healthy religious instincts of God, conscience and immortality, and the results are plain for all men to see. We throw over the Christian interpretations of these instincts, and here is the result. Men throw over Jehovah, the Lord God Almighty, the Father Omnipotent, and put their trust in carved monkeys or cats at 39s. 3d. the gross. The Germans suppress conscience and take the State as their guide: then they murder children and rape women without any apparent shame. Men disbelieve the hopes of immortality which Christ promises to the patient followers after goodness and truth, and lo! the world is full of fortune-tellers and seers, and of fools who believe in them and pay them: and men put their trust in table turnings and crystal gazers and mediums, and all the personnel and apparatus of superstition and folly and non-morality.

So, you see, I do not find my experiences and consequent convictions hanging in the air. I find in human nature the very solid and concrete roots from which the flowers of experience spring.

And so far from apologising for religion I am amazed at the unscientific bias of those who ignore or explain away these three roots of religion.

I reckon that science does not create facts: it discovers them, harmonises them, explains their causes and effects as far back as possible. I have learnt to distrust any general statements which ignore or explain away awkward facts. So when I find that quasi-scientists or quasi-philosophers or so-called apostles of common sense are asking us to ignore the spiritual and psychological facts of the instincts after God, goodness, freedom and immortality I am not

convinced. I feel that my own theory is much more scientific. For although my theory may not be rounded and complete, at least it includes these solid psychological facts, and does not attempt to find a simple solution by ignoring or explaining away all the facts which do not fit in with the theory.

If a man gets up and says that religion is untrue or absurd, I ask him why, in that case, men do, as a matter of fact, instinctively believe in God, conscience, and immortality.

No theory of the universe satisfies me which leaves these factors out of account. In fact, I believe them : I take them as real ; I refuse to allow them to be interned in order to render easier the task of some pseudo-philosopher who wants a simple, rounded (and untrue) theory of the universe.

Therefore, when I put religion before you as true I ask you to consider carefully its roots in human nature. You need not study books, necessarily. I do not send you either to St. Augustine or to Herbert Spencer. Look behind your own counter and see what goods you have there. Examine the list of your own mental furniture. Do you find there an instinct of belief in God ? Good : so did the ancient Egyptians, the ancient Greeks and Romans, to say nothing of the religious genius we call the Jew.

This belief wasn't invented by parsons in the Middle Ages or by priests in ancient times. They may have used it or played upon it, but they did so because they knew it was already there. A person may use or abuse a piano, but only when the piano is already there. To invent a god and force him upon men's consciences would be impossible unless there was a tendency already

present in men's minds to believe in Him. So it is with conscience and immortality.

Do you find your mind is predisposed to believe in them? Yes: but why? Because there are facts corresponding to them. There is a will or law of God of which conscience is the organ and witness: there is an Eternal life for which you are meant.

So believe me that in asking you to take religion seriously, it is not I who am asking you to believe in some fanciful fairy-tale. On the contrary, the fairy-tale belongs to those who tell you that the strongest spiritual instincts in man have no real foundation. That is a fairy-story if you like. If you tell a hungry man that food is an illusion: or a thirsty man that drink does not exist, then you can also tell the man that his hunger after righteousness, goodness, and God, lacks and must always lack its proper object.

Perhaps you may browbeat some into believing you. But you won't convince me. I do not care for the fairy-tales which block and deny my highest, best, and deepest instincts, longings, convictions.

If the instincts are there, and if life is real, then these instincts have their proper objects and satisfaction. I believe in God, goodness, and immortality, because I trust my own instincts and my own nature and will not ignore any of its ingredients.

But the argument does not stop even here. I am not the only person in the world. I find that I am not solitary in my instincts. There are great companies and brotherhoods who tell me, all down the ages, that what I believe they believe, what I have discovered they have discovered.

There is the Christian brotherhood the Church.

There is the wider brotherhood of theists, the believers in God and goodness.

I see that in a criticism of my book, "Have you understood Christianity?" the reviewer asks how I reconciled my view that religion comes from experience with "authority."

But I can't see the difficulty. If I have an attack of nerves I am convinced that something is wrong, but I am a bit confused as to what is the matter. I think myself very odd and wonder if I am a bit mad, and am generally miserable. But if I go to a doctor who says, "Ah yes: shell-shock, or worry; you feel so and so: such and such things affect you. I have hundreds of patients like you: the symptoms are very common and come from a definite cause. It will take so long to cure: kindly do this and that." I leave him marvellously strengthened. I still know there is something wrong, but it is illuminated for me. It is no mere oddity of mine: the disease is known, understood, classified. I can explain it to other sufferers and help them. So it is with religion. My experiences tell me that there is certainly something in it: it is, in essentials, true. But when I find behind me a mass of similar experiences, so general as to be worked out into a system and embodied in a brotherhood, I find at once the use and stimulus of authority. The great brotherhood of similar believers, of men and women who have had the same experiences, buttress me and complete me. They fortify me if my memory of my experiences burns low: they enlarge the range of my vision by explanation or by the account of their own further and deeper adventures; they point the way to better and grander discoveries.

In the presence of so great a Brotherhood and so immense a cloud of witnesses I cease to rely entirely on my own experience. I rely on them too, and continually keep verifying, by my own advancing explorations, that what they tell me is true.

Thus I grow to trust the Church entirely, and take on trust, provisionally, all the Church has to teach me. I do not say that I have, myself, yet verified all the creeds or all the facts of the Church's revelation of God. I have not yet decided whether I do absolutely accept as fact every individual miracle recorded in the New Testament, although I accept, *ex animo*, the miracle of the Resurrection and the principle of miracle.

I accept them all, provisionally, because so far as I have personally explored I find that the Church has taught me the truth.

I am like a man who goes to buy a cheese. The shopman inserts a scoop and brings away a wedge of the article. I try it and like it and buy the whole cheese. I have been eating that cheese for some time and so far I find that it is still a good cheese. I get more certain every day that I shall find no flaw in it, for the more I test it the more completely it satisfies me. So although I've not finished it, yet I trust it and my trust grows with my increasing experience of it.

I came whole-heartedly to the Church through my individual experience: I have tried to follow the Church's guidance for twenty-three years. I keep trying her advice, her teaching, her discipline. Sometimes I resisted, but always found that she was right in the end. I said I would never go to confession and that it wouldn't help me: yet I went and it does.

So although I keep in my mind a large room fairly full of unexplored and unsettled points, yet authority means an immense deal to me. For it strengthens and underpins the convictions of my individual self, and it introduces me to a larger life and has never failed me yet. I admit that faith enters in all these things, yet it is not blind belief or partisanship. Faith means to me that you can trust your own instincts and experiences. I don't call faith anything that is only a blind unreasoning adherence to somebody else's opinions. I call faith that trust which a man has that when he marries the girl he loves he will have a happy married life. It is faith but not blind unreasoning guess-work.

So when I put before you religion as a real thing I ask you not to accept it as a blind acquiescence in what I think or what other people feel. I ask you to explore your own nature.

Do you find there the solid concrete facts of instinctive belief in God, goodness, and immortality?

If you say "Yes," then I can beg you not to ignore them or pass them by faithlessly or carelessly.

And I can strengthen you by pointing out to you that you are not singular in discovering these roots of religion in yourself.

I myself, and a great multitude which no man can number have found these same roots. We have built on them, and find that they issue in the leaf and flower of power, contentment, joy, and satisfaction.

Unless you use them, we are assured that you will have all the dissatisfaction which comes from starving an essential part of your nature.

Trust yourself: and listen to our testimony too and

have faith enough to make the great experiment of tending and encouraging these roots to see whether the same flowers that blew in the gardens of the saints may not flourish happily in the garden of your own soul.

CHAPTER II

“WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST?”

GRANTED, however, that the roots of religion lie in a human being's psychological outfit, where does Christianity come in? Can't one be religious without being a Christian? Of course one can: anyone who recognises and respects his own godly convictions is religious. Mohammedans are religious though not Christians: Unitarians are religious although Jewish rather than Christian in their beliefs. But Christianity—we consider—is not merely true, but is the completest and the supremest form that religion can take.

Natural religion, i.e. the attempt to follow out the instincts of God and conscience, without the fresh revelation and inspiration which comes from Christ, is so disappointing. It is like a novel with a first-class opening chapter but which tails off at the end into incoherence and confusion.

The attempt to be religious without Christ has been so often tried. Even our old friend Horace tried it a few years before Christ came: and he failed.

“*Video meliora proboque; deteriora sequor.*” Which might be translated “I know I ought to live by my conscience; but I can't.”

Both Greeks and Romans tried to live by the natural instincts of religion, and both failed.

Socrates confesses that he and his friends must wait for the ideal teacher who should come with a fresh revelation; and the weariness and hollowness of pre-Christian religion at Rome in the century before Christ is well known. Men tried to satisfy and follow out their instinctive beliefs by auguries and mechanical rites and ceremonies, and behold all was weariness and disillusionment, until, as the Stoics, they fell into a gloomy distrust of their own natural beliefs. Men clung indeed to conscience, but, divorced from God and immortality, conscience is but a gloomy and joyless taskmaster, or else, like the Epicureans, they valued pleasure as the refuge from life: and pleasure, as a guide to life, may be moderately safe with naturally good men, but for the mass it simply means moral ruin.

Men had religious instincts, but the roots never threw up green shoots or bore fragrant buds: they remained underground till they rotted in the dark.

Whatever you may say of Christianity as true, it is incontrovertible that the early Christians were noted for their energy and joy: at least it looks as if religion was prolific at last after the long night of barrenness.

And this is true even of the Jews. No doubt they were far ahead of Romans and Greeks, not only in religious temperament, but in the revelation given to them through their great religious leaders, Abraham, Moses and the prophets. But by our Lord's time much of the inspiration had fallen flat. No doubt faithful souls remained here and there: Simeon, Anna, Zechariah, John the Baptist. But most of the

current religion was mere ecclesiasticism, engaged in fruitless quarrels about Sabbaths and tithes and minute points of the Law.

No one can read the Gospels and say that the religion of the Pharisees and Sadducees is a religion of energy and joy and genuine missionary fervour. It is not a religion of power. It dwells mainly on the past. It clings to the grandeur of the past but is an autumn religion, not a religion of the spring.

And the old longings for God and forgiveness and holiness, which are still found in the best people at Jerusalem and among the simple peasants of Galilee, centre in a future, not in anything present and satisfying.

You gather that very intensely from St. Paul. He was a righteous Jew if anyone ever was. He had kept all the customs and obeyed all the Law but his moral being was unsatisfied: his soul was still in the Arctic regions. No abundant and luxurious blooms flourished in his religious garden: the stiff rows of dull and formal stalks almost frightened him when he looked into it. Where was the joy of forgiveness, and the power of holiness, and the passion and zeal of a message to mankind wholly worth a life's service and self-sacrifice? It had all side-stepped off into the zeal of a fanatic who crushes others if they show signs of fresh life or originality.

Therefore Christianity came to St. Paul as the great relief. With the sigh of a prisoner as he leaves the dungeon he stepped out into the freedom and joy of the knowledge and love of Christ. He draws a great breath of power and emancipation, and then descends into the arena of human life with the burning

words of a message which shall move mountains and convert a world.

He at last is free : and he will release his fellow-prisoners. They will hear, he is sure, because they too have felt the shackles and longed for the light. Jews shall shake off their formalism, Greeks shall drop the pursuit of the weary round and satieties of pleasure, Romans shall rise above their gloomy self-righteousness and their barren stoicism. The world shall burst into spring and the soul of man shall feel all the warmth and passion of its nature satisfied at last. In Christ the souls of men shall burst into new life : the sun shall come out : the birds shall sing : the water shall become wine for them and the mountains drop with honey and milk. Righteousness shall no longer be a gloomy abstinence from the common joys of men or a rigid adherence to a code of rules. It shall take to itself a heart : it shall be instinct with new power : it shall ally itself to the life and heart and love of God. Its centre shall be no code of laws but love itself, for God is love.

.

All this is what Christianity did for St. Paul and for the early Christians. This is what it does for a multitude of Christians to-day. I do not say that all real Christians feel it, for they have not known the fetters of heathenism or Judaism : some of them, alas, lack the noble moral and religious energy of those early Christians who sought the light so eagerly.

But if a man has taken his soul seriously : has wandered in the paths of doubt or sin ; such a man coming to a real belief in Christ as the power of God

often has the same kind of experience as St. Paul had. You can see it written in his face: he is a new man. Perhaps for the first time he feels that his sins are really forgiven: he feels clean and washed and free through Christ's pardoning love. Perhaps he has realised his destiny and sees before him the glory and majesty of his future in Christ. Perhaps he just feels the gladness and joy of being in loving touch with the Friend of Friends, and is bright with the joy of a lover. Perhaps he is more sober than that, yet feels safe and satisfied, knowing at last where he stands, and able to look back without regret and to look forward with serenity and confidence. "I know Him whom I have believed," said St. Paul, and the ordinary Christian feels the same. No longer does he feel the misery of religious instincts which are never satisfied but remain like captive birds in a cage. He felt before the capacity for flight: now at last he flies. Life is no longer just a puzzle wherein men know neither whence they came nor whither they go. The Christian who has "found Christ" knows that the power and light by which he is possessed guarantees the truths that he came from God and goes back to God and therefore all is well.

If then I had to put the relationship between Christianity and the instinctive beliefs in God and goodness into a phrase, I should put it thus.

Man has religious instincts: to ignore them is folly and blindness. But natural religion carries a man but half-way: it shows him his capacities but never satisfies them. Christianity, i.e. right relationship with Christ—union with Christ—contact with Christ—faith in Christ—(call it what you will) simply

satisfies. It provides men and women with the proper object of their religious capacities. It results in love, joy, peace and all the other fruits of a real and living religion, and, after all, it is by the fruits thereof that you judge everything.

Therefore can you be surprised that we who, in our moments of insight, find such joy, peace and power in religion should put the situation before you in order that you too, at the earliest moment, may share our happiness?

CHAPTER III

HISTORICAL CHRISTIANITY

So far I have argued simply from what we call psychological facts, that is to say, that when we explore the mental and moral outfit of men we find that practically all men have a sense of God, goodness and immortality, and that Christians (who are real) bring these root-endowments to a satisfactory and joyful result. Hence I deduce the truth of Christianity : what brings peace and joy to man's inherent instincts must be true. I should argue the same about marriage or music. By their fruits you know their truth.

But Christianity has its roots not only in psychology but in history. It has expressed itself in historical acts and episodes which lend themselves to be tested by the rules and canons of historical enquiry. In other words, Christ's life and deeds are open to enquiry and criticism, and these are so much a part of Christianity that if they can be disproved then in spite of all the psychological evidence we should be bound to modify or seek some other explanation of religion than the Christian solution. We can't quite say " Christianity makes me so happy, and is so satisfying, that it must be true." I can imagine people saying so : I think I could myself, but it is not the way Christianity has been presented to the world. In its original presenta-

tion to the world by the Apostles it based itself on witness, particularly the witness of the Resurrection.

The Apostles said, in effect, "We have been witnesses of the life and deeds of Someone who claimed to be our Master, our Messiah, the Son of God. We have been convinced that He is true and that therefore His teaching and message are true, and the climax of our conviction is that He rose from the dead and we saw Him and handled Him and knew the Resurrection as a fact. Therefore He is God's Word or Revelation to men. Listen therefore and obey Him. Repent, believe, trust Him, be united to Him and in Him you will—like us—find salvation and joy."

We cannot ignore the challenge of this historical setting. Yet there are difficulties. After all they saw the Lord, we didn't. We have to make up our mind whether the witness is true: and although some of us feel pretty sure, through our spiritual experience, of the value of Christianity, still, for the sake of those who have not so experienced it yet, and because Christianity does commend itself on the ground of historical as well as of psychological truth, we are foolish if we try to leave out the historical side. Yet how can we get at it? I think there are two decisive methods.

The first is the method of criticism. Are the gospels intrinsically true? Here we must sometimes trust the experts. There is internal evidence and external evidence. We know something of contemporary history, Roman history for instance. Do the allusions to "Cyrenius, Governor of Syria," or to Augustus and Claudius, the Emperors of Rome, which we find in the New Testament tally with history as we know

it apart from the gospels? Does the comparison of one gospel with another suggest that they are true history or give the appearance of a cunningly devised bit of ecclesiastical fraud or chicanery? Judging as an ordinary non-expert Christian I can only say that as time goes on it becomes clearer than ever that the New Testament writers were honest men who put down facts as they occurred. I cannot say that they were never mistaken or could never be mistaken in a date or a quotation or in the apprehension or description of a fact. But as a whole it seems overwhelmingly true that the writers are honest and their facts must be taken as facts if there is any value in history whatever.

And even non-experts have their right to speak. Is it conceivable that a character such as our Lord's could have been invented by four separate writers and presented in such harmony and such satisfying beauty?

When we study the character of the contemporary Jews and see their limitations, their narrowness, their national and local bias: when we see in the very best of them a sense of their own sinfulness and need, whence comes this lofty portrait of One who was sinless: universal: perfect in character and moral perfection: combining the strength of men with the tenderness of women? Something so perfect must have been revealed, not invented: it is a portrait, not a creation.

So I believe that if any history is history then the gospels are history. You can dig as deep into them as you like: you will rise from the study of them saying that if any writings can be trusted, these can.

But there is another line of argument which is of great historical use to myself.

I concentrate on the essential point of historical Christianity, the Resurrection.

Some miracles I accept though I cannot prove them for myself. I accept them as part of the web and woof of the whole portraiture. It is conceivable that sometimes the evangelists misunderstood or misinterpreted the phenomena they saw.

So although I explicitly accept the miraculous I am not necessarily committed to the literal evangelistic account of every miracle. Some miracles, for instance, would probably not be considered miracles now. There are doctors to-day who, using hypnotic methods, restore the blind to sight.

So I do not necessarily accept all miracles as miracles in the sense that only Christ or servants of Christ could have done them. They may well be instances of laws, known to Christ, but not to His contemporaries. They may have been evidences of His insight and power, but not necessarily exhibitions of superhuman powers.

Even the Resurrection may well be in accordance with such laws as govern a life which is sinless and perfectly in accord with the Will of God. But if Christ could prophesy this Resurrection and did actually rise, it is surely as convincing a proof as history can give that He was what He said He was, and was teaching and living in accordance with the Will of God.

Did the Resurrection then take place? Of course we have the testimony of witnesses. St. Paul, for instance, in the Epistle to the Corinthians mentions

as witnesses, "above five hundred brethren at once of whom the greater part remain unto this day." This seems pretty cool if it wasn't true, considering that his readers could interrogate freely above three hundred living witnesses.

But to me the convincing bit of evidence is this : If our Lord did not rise, whence arose the Church whose existence was based on the Resurrection ?

On Good Friday our Lord's disciples left Him. They thought He had failed. "They all forsook Him and fled." Fifty-two days later they were out in the streets, preaching His Resurrection, His power and His Divinity ; gathering in thousands of converts : gladly suffering shame, reproach and death for the truth of what they said.

Is it conceivable that the enthusiasm of the Church, even the existence of the Church, could have been founded on a known lie or a desperate theory that perhaps He was alive in some other existence though His own prophecy of Resurrection had signally failed ?

I simply cannot believe it. They preached, they suffered, they triumphed, because they had seen Him after He rose from the dead. The Brotherhood of Christians, the Church, owes its very existence to the fact of the Resurrection and therefore I believe it.

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So when I add together all these facts : the roots of religion found in practically all men and women ; the joy and satisfaction of these instincts found in experienced Christianity ; the historical truth of Christianity as found in the study of the gospels and

in the proved fact of the Resurrection, then I am not only ready to stake my life on the truth and power of Christianity, but claim boldly that you ought to do the same if you want to follow truth and honesty and salvation.

CHAPTER IV

HOW TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN

AGAIN at this point I may drop some of my readers. They will say that they want a bit more time to think over what I have tried to say about the universal instincts of God, conscience and immortality. They may ask for still more time to weigh up the claims of Christ to be God revealed as Man. I think I will not attempt here to give the reasons why we believe in Christ as God, for I have recently done so in my "Sixpenny Book of Instruction for Church People."¹ I do not think I have anything to add to what I said then. I think I could say briefly that I believe in Christ because He fits our religious instincts so thoroughly and yet heightens and satisfies them. I buttress this by my belief in the historical truth of His life and claims, by the faith I have in His Resurrection, by the joyful experiences of the Church and its individual members when they have tried to follow Him as their Master. Honestly I can't place Christ anywhere except as the infallible teacher, the reliable character, the soul of truth. You can't make Him into an ordinary man : He refuses to be limited within those lines. And in the long run you can't place Him in any place except the highest, where He is found as

¹ Longmans.

the Revealer of God, as God revealing Himself to us. And He fits human life so well, as Mr. Phillipps has recently shown so excellently in his fascinating book "Europe Unbound" (Duckworth, 6s.).

For Jesus speaks to the ordinary workaday man : to human nature as human. Philosophers and clever people are always wanting a religion which will satisfy the intellects of philosophic or clever people. They don't really care what happens to the masses, the vulgar herd. They can go hang, or obey what the clever ones condescend to tell them. With Jesus it is so different. The high and haughty ones must come down to the rations of the people : there must be no cornering of spiritual food for the intellectually rich. And the commands of Jesus must be God's commands if they can be implicitly trusted, and they must be clear and simple for very ordinary people.

I think the commands of our Lord *are* simple : perhaps the Church has elaborated too much. Let us see what they are. First you are to trust your spiritual instincts : that is faith. It is not blind faith, because the instincts are there before the faith in them can exist. Faith takes them as real, and trusts the higher longings of the heart of man.

Thus you believe in God, in conscience and in immortality. It is open to you to deny them but at the cost of distrusting the very framework of the human personality. [Hence the general unlovableness and unhumanness of unbelievers : they distrust human life.] This is the ground on which Jesus works : He takes these instincts for granted as true.

Then He goes on to amplify these instincts : God

is a Father: conscience must work down to the minutest details of daily life: immortality is certain ("if it were not so I would have told you").

But He also teaches that God reveals a new way of life for His children. Christ Himself is the Way, and God's children are to be linked up to Christ's personality. His personality is not exclusive and bounded: we can and must get into union with Him. "Except a man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God."

And this union with the personality of Christ is effected through prayer and Sacraments. Prayer guarantees that we are wishful for union with Him, baptism effects the union: Holy Communion perfects it.

So a Christian is one who, being in a prayerful and faithful state, is sacramentally united to Christ by baptism. He is then a new man, because He is endowed with the new powers and possibilities of the Personality of Christ which he now shares. No longer is the Christian merely a mortal man, he is "in Christ," a "new creature."¹ And as such he fulfils the duties and functions of his new life. He prays more and more earnestly so that he may be more open and responsive to the advance of Christ into the kingdom of his soul. He receives Communion more and more devoutly that Christ may altogether make His home in his heart. He becomes less and less mortal-man and more and more Christ-man.

¹ This is where I find it difficult to follow Dr. A. C. Headlam's writings. "Christianity is primarily ethical" ("Church Quarterly," January, 1917, p. 311). From my point of view the new and better ethic results from the man being a new creature in Christ and therefore able to draw upon the resources of Christ's personality to which he is now united.

And as such his life gradually becomes Christ-like. Increasingly God is his Father, altogether dear and beloved and trusted : increasingly Christ is His Strength and Life and the Holy Spirit his Power and Guide. In a word He loves God. And then looking out upon the world and understanding that all men and women belong to God's family and his—some as Christians in the Brotherhood of Christ, and all as members of the great family of Humanity—he comes to love them all. He will care for the welfare of their bodies and souls. They shall have decent homes and wages and fresh air and happiness. They too shall share his secret and sweet discovery of the love of God. So he comes to love his neighbour as himself.

And that is all. The Christian is the person who has found new life in Christ : continues and increases that life by prayer and sacrament and overflows into a great love of God and of his brethren. I often think we have bothered too much about detail. Ritual, Fasting Communion, forms of prayer, Saints' Days, prayers for the dead, Adoration of Christ in the Sacrament—all have their place in the full detailed scheme of the Christian life of Catholic Christendom. But they are details. The grand scheme of Christian salvation exhibits men and woman who, trusting the primal instincts implanted in their own nature, rise to the satisfaction of those instincts in a new life derived from a real unity with the person of Christ made possible by sacraments received with faith and prayer.

Do not stumble over sacraments : they are useless symbols unless they be—as they are—instruments

through which Christ imparts His life and personality to us. Do not even over-emphasise prayer as against the sacraments : it is quite right that we should give our very souls in surrender to Christ, but sacraments give us a grace which comes from Christ and operate (thank God) when human prayer grows weary or exhausted, and bear us along when we ourselves are ready to faint and fail. Do not emphasise prayer to the extent of driving from the altar some weary perplexed soul who seeks refuge with Christ when the power of prayer seems to have departed.

Let us pray to the uttermost, but let us also remember that the sacraments offer us the realest blessings of Christ when the spirit fails and man can give nothing yet can receive everything.

So that is what I put before you. Your life united to Christ by baptism and kept alive and strong by prayer and aspiration and by sacramental grace. And that union with Christ will teach you love : the love of the Heavenly Father who sent Christ to you, and of the humanity which you at last recognise as constituting your very own family in God.

This then is your ideal. How can you attain it ? Now I am not out to give you a series of elaborate rules. Do you believe in God and Christ, and are you baptised ? If so, you are in union with Christ. Do you pray and receive your communion in that service where Christ is present and Christ gives you fresh life through receiving the spiritual food of His Body and Blood ? If you say " Yes," then all is well : if you say " No," then prepare carefully and start doing so.

Have you learnt that Christians are your brothers

and sisters in Christ, and that all men belong to a common humanity?

If you say "No," then think it out and treat them so: theory will follow practice. But if you humbly say "Yes, I mean and try to treat them as such," then you have attained. You have nothing more to learn except in depth and breadth. Persevere, and be thankful that by God's mercy you are a Christian, and may God Almighty bless you.

CHAPTER V

THE GATEWAY

HAVE you ever really prayed ? For you see that at the end of the last chapter I took it for granted that God's gifts, and Christ's bestowal of a real share of His personality upon us, found us in a responsive—that is to say, a prayerful—state of soul.

But when I finished the chapter I said to myself, " But supposing they don't pray : then all will be useless ; God's gifts can no more impress an unprayerful soul than a steel pen can bite upon glass." So I felt I must again urge you to reconsider prayer, which is the gateway through which a soul must pass if it is to be permanently in touch and contact with God. You will perhaps say " You mean, do I say my prayers ? " Yes, partly I mean that, but I mean more. " Do you say your prayers properly " is really what I mean, or still better, " Is your soul always in a state of energetic looking towards God : do you habitually rely on Him for guidance, comfort, strength, enlightenment ? " For I think we must not limit prayer to prayers said. Of course we shall say our prayers. I have little patience with the lofty souls who say that we need never embody our requests or appeals in words. It is too inhuman. You might just as well fall in love and never tell the lady that you cared for her. Lovers

do talk as well as love. Yet words aren't all. They must be the expression of an underlying loving attitude of soul. So it is with prayer. It is quite right to say prayers ; so our Lord taught us in the Our Father. Yet the most important part of prayer is not the words we say : it is the permanent set and bias of the soul towards God. If we are responsive God can enter into us : and this responsiveness is prayer. Sometimes it takes the form of prayers said or praise given or offices recited : always it is latent in an attitude of the personality towards God consciously adopted until it becomes habitual.

So with some people the best prayers they make take the form of a wistful longing towards God, Christ, goodness, beauty, holiness, love. But with most of us and with all beginners we are wise if we persevere in daily prayers said and look upon these as our daily duty, but add, as a circumference to them, the sort of thinking and longing and aspiration which get called by such names as meditation, mental prayer, contemplation.

I distrust the Christian who says he has passed the need of daily prayers and finds his peace in a simple wistfulness of the spirit. Our Lord certainly thought differently : " Give us this day our daily bread," and this wistfulness itself, unless steadied by the daily duty of prayers said, is apt to get undisciplined, irregular and vague.

So when I ask you whether you have ever really prayed I mean something quite simple. I have not asked you whether you meditate or contemplate : that will come later perhaps. I ask you whether you are habitually looking to God for illumination and

strength, and whether you embody this in prayers daily said. It is easy to kneel down (unless you are on active service) and run through a few collects or even the Lord's Prayer : but prayer asks more than this. It means that you really believe in God and in His power and love. He cares for you : wants you to be holy and happy and is ready to help you. You, for your part, have probably found how powerless you are to advance spiritually in your own strength alone.

Temptation is stronger than you like and threatens to disturb your peace of mind. Perhaps you have made some real bad mistakes, and have committed real sins. You have been deeply selfish, nastily uncontrolled, despicably cowardly or frivolous. You feel, because you have a conscience, that you honestly want pardon and imperatively need strength. Now have you ever asked for pardon with real energy and earnestness ? I do not say " Have you made your confession to a minister of God ? " because that question comes later when you have considered the nature of Christ's Church and the powers and functions of the Church's ministry. But have you ever knelt in silence, in the presence of God alone, and said " I acknowledge that I did this : I failed in that. I repent and am heartily sorry, or at least I desire to repent. Will You forgive me for Christ's sake, and, because of His Cross and Passion and undying love, wash away my sins and give me a new and clean heart ? " Or have you knelt and acknowledged your own weakness and unholiness, and said with real meaning " I see and feel that in myself I am powerless. Though I strive yet I fail : and now I have failed again. Will You send the Holy Spirit to pour fresh power into my heart so

that where before I failed in my own strength, I may succeed henceforth in His strength?" Have you prayed in any way like this? Or have you ever prayed for the conversion of the world, or for a blessing on our nation or Navy and Army, or for sinners and sufferers, in such a way as shows that you really believe that God actually hears and will—in His own way—make an actual and definite answer? Until we do so God can do so little. "He could do there no wonderful work because of their unbelief." God, Who has given us freedom to choose Him or reject Him, depends on us so largely, and has put Himself so much in our power. I believe that till we learn to pray, God's gifts and ministrations of love cannot really reach us. They are but barren and shallow things to us because the soil is not prepared by prayer.

If you put down this book with the sort of feeling "What does he want me to do, or where begin?" then begin here, ask yourself if you do ever pray vividly and really, and try and improve. As you improve, as you enter the gateway which is prayer, then God's gifts will become real to you: Baptism will constitute you veritably a child of God in Christ: Confirmation will display the Spirit's power in you to fight evil and to love the good: Communion will bring you holiness at last, through the life of Christ imparted to you.

And I also want to tell you why I dwell so earnestly upon the use and power of Prayer. It is because I find that people think Religion is *knowledge*. Indeed it isn't. I am better informed if I know that Abraham was the father of Isaac and that Galatia was in Asia Minor, but I'm not more religious.

It is no more to me than the knowledge of his wife having been born in Peckham and not in Rochester affects a man's married life.

Religion is a relation between personalities: a friendship between friends: a love between lovers: a duty between partners; it is not the knowledge of a string of facts.

Let it be granted that some knowledge is necessary for real religion: but not much. You must believe that God exists: that Christ reveals Him: that we must obey and love Him, and that He blesses us, if we look to Him, by graces and blessings both sacramental and unsacramental. You must reflect that if all men are God's children, and all Christians members of Christ, then we have brotherly duties and responsibilities both to Christians and to mankind.

But beyond this minimum all is elaboration. I do not deny that it is right elaboration, but I say that all this knowledge—not only the elaboration part but even the simple essential knowledge I have outlined—is merely a means to an end. And the end, which is religion, is that a man or woman loves God and—in God—loves the brethren, angelic, human, subhuman.

So religion means—can I say it too strongly or simply?—that there is a personal and friendly relationship between you and God. In order that that relationship should come about God set to work to devise means. For the sake of this friendship—this love—this union—this religion—God put religious instincts and drawings into your heart. For the sake of this religion He sent Jesus Christ, He founded a Church. For the sake of this religion exist ministers, Church buildings, ritual, services, Bibles, Prayer Books,

altars, prayer meetings, Eucharists and everything else ecclesiastical you can imagine. Simply that the souls of God's children might be united to Him and to each other in Him.

A short time ago I was told that I was a bit of a bigot because I never seemed to remember that, perhaps, in twenty years' time fresh facts would be discovered by science or in history which would make me change my religion. I replied that any facts discovered by science or history would alter my religion exactly as a man's married life would be altered by finding that his wife was aged thirty-six instead of thirty-five, or that her parents had come from Boston and not from New Orleans.

Fresh facts might conceivably make a change in the setting of one's religion : you might have to alter the frame so to speak ; but the picture inside won't alter. Personal relationships don't alter, unless persons alter. I know God won't alter, therefore my only fear is not from new facts but only from sin. Sin would alter me : and if it altered me it would alter my personal relationship to God, and that I do truly fear and dread. But fresh historical facts won't alter my religion, because my religion is a relationship between me and God : you might as well try to alter it by fresh facts, as to try and convince a man who has spent ten happy years that all the time he was miserable.

But, perhaps you object, " Supposing you found that the Acts were a late forgery, or that some miracles didn't happen, or that much of the early books of the Bible are stories with a moral purpose and not literal historical fact ; isn't that going to make any differ-

ence ? ” It might make a difference to the setting of my religion no doubt, but my very point is that these things aren’t religion. They are the frame of religion only. Religion is something personal and can only be altered by something affecting personality. Change God or change me and then indeed I’ve received a mortal blow : all other fresh facts I will receive with pleasure and set to work to recarve the framework of my religion. But religion itself, the free and happy personal right-relationship with God : the fact and sweetness of the love of God : the joy and relief of forgiveness for Christ’s sake : the continually experienced power of God to help and comfort ; ask me to disbelieve my existence sooner than deny these. In fact I would far sooner deny the reality of my existence, than deny the reality of a life lived in God, which—to my thinking—alone makes life even tolerable.

You may say “ Ah ! but that’s only your own experience, you can’t prove it to us.” Quite true, yet I have tried to show you earlier in the book that I’m in very fairly good company, but even if it was only my own what have you got better ? or as good ? My religion makes me look on God as my Friend : makes me a devout believer (at however great a distance) in “ truth and honour, freedom and courtesy ” : gives me plenty of hope and faith in life : gives me (at least among fellow-Christians) a good fund of laughter and joy and natural happiness : encourages me to fight against my many shortcomings and failings, with good hope of final success in some future existence. And I believe in a good time coming : a happiness beyond the grave.

What can you give me in exchange ? Do you want

me to try that dreary hopeless powerless materialism which results in multitudes seeking pleasure because they have no hope, or resorting to wizards and every kind of charlatan and rogue because they have no faith ?

Thank you : I know our sort is better.

Therefore I beg to remind you again that religion starts with a personal relationship between Persons—You and God : a fair fellowship to be gained by prayer, which is the first conscious meeting-place between God and the soul.

Seek religion then through prayer. Gain knowledge in order that your framework may be clear and dignified : the setting of your religion must not be untrue : bad frames do spoil good pictures.

But remember that religion, like human love, is a personal thing and to gain it you must enter by the inevitable gateway—the gateway of Prayer.

CHAPTER VI

THE THEOLOGY BEHIND THE SACRAMENTS

YOU will perhaps wonder why I speak so often of the Sacraments. And indeed, from a shallow point of view, it would be much easier to teach religion without Sacraments.

We should then say something like this: "Your religion is based upon your own religious instincts: the innate beliefs in God, goodness and immortality. But if you try to serve God, and to be good, and attain immortality by yourself you will fail in your endeavours. All sorts of people have tried to build their religion on the mere natural foundations; Greeks tried it, Romans, and, above all, the Jews, and all failed. They felt their own powerlessness. 'O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' But Christianity supplies the want. It gives power. Honest Christians do not feel the sense of failure. They are humble because their success is due to God, and not themselves. But they do find God in their souls: they do keep away from deadly sin: they are assured of immortality. They are full of joy and power, if their religion is real. Try it for yourself and see. Remember that Christianity is not a mere idea. Its history is based on historical facts: its blessings are witnessed to by multitudes: test it your-

self. Try and do what Christ says : take Him as your Guide and Master and see whether your conscience is satisfied and your inner self uplifted and purified. Don't merely believe us ; try it yourself. And all you have to do is to make the venture of faith and pray. Then, through the help of prayer you will be able to follow out the guidance of your conscience."

Such, roughly, would be our teaching and we might produce praying people who were honestly trying to follow out their conscience. There are many such and they are good. Yet surely they are incomplete according to all the teaching of the Christian religion. For Christ said : " Go, make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost," or again, " This is My Body . . . this is My Blood, do this in remembrance of Me." On the score of obedience alone we cannot teach, as complete, a Christianity which leaves out these Sacraments. But there must be a philosophy behind the Sacraments, Christ wouldn't enjoin them if they were mere ritual or useless. The truth is that Christ wants more than our obedience and service. He loves us enough to offer us real union with Himself. Our personalities are not complete : we are really only what I might call " three-quarter power " personalities. Our personalities are increased by union with other personalities. A nomad is a completer person when incorporated in a tribe ; a bachelor is a more complete person when happily married ; a Christian is completer when enrolled in the Brotherhood of Christians which we call the Church. So a human personality is only truly complete when united to God and to the blessed company of all other righteous souls in heaven or

earth. That is heaven surely : the ultimate union with God and the glorious company of the blessed. Now when God deals with us He deals with us through and in Christ. United to Christ the Son of God we are united to God. And Christ meets us on our own human level : He came to earth for that very purpose, that as Man He could find union with man.

He didn't come merely to teach us, but to give us union with Himself. He is the Vine, we are to be the branches, deriving our life from the energy and sap of the parent Stem.

But *how* are we grafted into Christ : how does His personality touch ours and complete ours ? Through Sacraments. Prayer is necessary because it generates and produces the condition of our souls which Christ requires. He cannot touch us or impart His personality to our souls unless they are receptive, i.e. prayerful. Prayer and Bible-reading and religious meditation break up the ground of the soul so that the Sower can sow the seed of His own personality in it.

But the actual imparting or bestowal of personality comes through *grace*. Grace can be given imperceptibly like the dew from Heaven upon the thirsty ground, but the normal orderly guaranteed " means of grace " are the Sacraments. In Baptism Christ touches the soul with new life by contact with Himself. In Holy Communion He gives deeper Life and dwells in the soul. Conversion is the waking up of the soul to the contact and love of Christ. All three are necessities to the perfect soul : but the base of them all is the completion of a human personality by inclusion in the divine Personality of Christ.

This is, to my mind, the only explanation, not only

of Christ's words about union, "I will be in you," "I in them," "He that eateth My Flesh . . . dwelleth in Me and I in him," but also of that characteristic feeling of completeness which comes to so many Christians. All real joy comes from the satisfaction of some essential human need: but the satisfaction which a Christian so often attains is sometimes quite overwhelmingly complete, because he has found completion not only of some individual instinct or partial desire, but of himself. He is complete at last and therefore absolutely content. I know of nothing which in its absoluteness or finality is comparable to the sense of completion which comes at times to a converted and sincere Christian. For the time being he is literally at rest in his soul. He desires nothing more. Earthly pleasures are needless except in so far as they feed the fire of this inward sense of energetic peace and love. He does his daily work or lives the daily round in an indescribable atmosphere of power and calm. He feels he cannot fail in anything. And I think the converse of all this is the restlessness of those who have not yet "found Christ." No doubt there are temperamentally peaceful persons, but the world as a whole is restless, unsatisfied, ever seeking distraction which shall pass the time. Aimless pleasures, luxury, work, sin, are all harnessed to the service of the soul who feels that it *must* find satisfaction somewhere, though it knows not where. Matthew Arnold puts it poignantly. "Fresh products fall from his tired hands"; man is ever working, sorrowing, striving, seeking, yet never finding: he is "still unblest." One wonders sometimes how such writers have the assurance to criticise other people's philos-

phies or religion when they themselves have made such a mess of happiness.

I submit that the explanation is that the soul of every man is made for God, in the sense that each human personality is incomplete without union with others and, in especial, with God. Everybody feels this need in a blind way, and is always seeking to satisfy it. So they rush after pleasure, sin, distraction, and find a blind alley in every case. Can anyone say that the "man of the world" or the roué or the drunkard is a happy man? Isn't unrelieved "pleasure" the worst and weariest of pain? But some have discovered where this satisfaction of the blind human need of completeness is to be found. It is found in union with God, and Christ offers to us this union by incorporating us into Himself. We can have this union if we are in a fit (i.e. prayerful) state of soul and He bestows Himself, His own Personality, through His grace. And the main, guaranteed, assured means of grace are the Sacraments.

Therefore we cannot by any means omit the Sacraments. You might, indeed, have a religion without them: but it wouldn't be the religion of your personality completed by God's Personality through your sacramental union with the Incarnate Christ.

Therefore although our task is complicated by the necessity to teach and preach the Sacraments as the crown of the Christian religion for faithful Christians, yet we must make the effort lest Christianity be but an emotion and a morality instead of the completion of the individual's personality by union with the Personality of God and the personalities of all God's other faithful children; Baptism incorporates you

into Christ : Communion fulfils the soul with Christ's presence : and spiritual union between Christ and the soul brings forth the fruits of completeness, the lovely fruits of love and joy, peace and power.

P.S.—A boy has just been to my cabin and asked me if I will explain Holy Communion and Christianity to him. Somehow it seemed to come out so naturally and he seemed so convinced and satisfied that I am adding it as a simplified edition of the above chapter. What I said was this :

“ You must understand that Christianity is a supernatural life. At the bottom rung of life's ladder you find the animal-men, people who just smoke, drink, eat, sleep, gamble, fornicate, who in a word do exactly as their animal instincts prompt them.

“ On the next higher rung you find men and women of natural religion, who trust their instincts of God, goodness and immortality and try to follow them out. They are good people, but they don't get all the way : something is lacking.

“ Then you get the top rung, where you find those who have satisfied their religious instincts and reached joy and peace by union of themselves with Christ. But you must understand how Christ reaches you and unites his personality to you. Well : you understand marriage ; it is a union of personalities who henceforth live a united life, sharing a common home, common children, common interests. In the same sort of way Christ comes to souls partly mystically and spiritually, mainly by the Sacraments.

“ In Baptism Christ came to you and made you His own, but you probably didn't realise it till you thought about it. Just as an Englishman doesn't realise his

nationality till the stress of war brings it out, so many a baptised person doesn't realise what baptism involves : but thought, conversion, life itself, bring him to realise it.

" And Christ came to you once at Baptism but He wishes not only to bless you once, but to be inseparable with you. So He comes to you daily, weekly, monthly, in Holy Communion. Every time you make your Communion Christ visits you again and becomes more and more your daily and intimate friend.

" But you mustn't forget prayer (Bible reading : meditation). For prayer is the opening of the door to Christ. Unless the door of your heart is open, Christ can come as often as He likes but He can't get in. Therefore prayer (the attitude of prayer : conversion) is essential, for Christ can't act on our hearts without it. So remember, Christianity is a life of union between you and Christ : He came to you in Baptism, He comes in Holy Communion, as your Friend and the giver of Life ; He lifts your life within His : He completes your personality by His.

" And all that remains is to produce the fruits of this union with Christ. And the fruits are the acts and deeds and words of a noble, unselfish, loving Christian life."

CHAPTER VII

HOW CAN WE SPREAD RELIGION ?

I TAKE it that if your religion is real, if it brings you power and joy, you will inevitably want to hand it on to the world. Those who love their fellow-creatures, and have found out a great discovery, must heartily desire to make it known to others. Your religion is real because it is an experience : it is not merely the knowledge of a philosopher who deduces from the instincts of human hearts that there must be a God, a real standard of goodness, a real immortality. It is not even a faith received with docility from the Church. Both these elements are included in your religion but they are but substructure : they are not the fair and complete building. The religion you want to propagate is the religion of love : you have really taken Christ as your friend : you have learnt through prayer and thought to love Him : He has found you and touched you in the Sacraments wherein He completes and fulfils your personality by His. The result is that you never feel really deserted or alone : you have the key to all the real happiness of life and the antidote to sin. Sin ceases to attract, it would forfeit the friendship of your Friend : it would destroy your very personality ; therefore you do not even want to sin, you would rather not. But I defy you to keep

all this to yourself : you simply cannot. All around you you see joylessness and powerlessness : the tragedies of a sad world which knows not where to turn. You possess the remedy : how can you help them ? Yet here is the very point of difficulty : even miserable people, conscious of their misery, will not believe you or try your remedy. Though they are disgusted with sin they are slaves to it ; though they have no philosophy of their own they shrink from trying yours. What can you do ? First, of course, there is the duty of bearing testimony. People will start arguing and you must meet them at their level, and without trying to *prove* religion to them you can at least show them what is to be said for it and invite them to try it. If a man argues, for instance, that religion is all fudge, you can at least show the reality of natural religion and ask him how he accounts for the normal human instincts of God, goodness and immortality. You can at least show him that religion is not a baseless fabric, but has solid roots in the human heart. If he goes away and says, " Well, there's more in it than I thought," you will have done something. Or if he agrees with you about natural religion but demurs to Christianity, you can at least point out how baffled and unsatisfying is natural religion without its completion in Christ. You can instance the Stoics or the Jews and show how natural religion declined in the first case into gloomy resignation, and in the latter to either despair or an eager anticipation of something further to come, whereas Christianity actually confers both joy and power and a supreme sense of release and freedom. You can point to the evidences of the unique personality of Christ,

and to the necessity of the Resurrection if the rise of the Church is to be explained. And all the time you can afford to speak with patience and power. For have you not tried it yourself? And has it not freed you from sin, and given you joy and fulfilment? I do not say you will convince everybody by such arguments and considerations, but you will help some, and if other Christians do the same the total will be large. But you must always end your arguments in the same way: "Don't necessarily believe me, try it for yourself." "Pray to the God you can believe in from the standpoint at which you have already arrived, and if He is, He will help you to mount higher."

And, of course, we clergy and our lay helpers have a very special job. We must teach; and teach in a much clearer and more definite way than ever before. We must clarify our own minds so that we know what we can teach and what we can't. We can teach about religion, but we can never teach religion. Religion only arises when God and the soul meet. All teaching: even prayer and Sacraments are but means or purveyors to this meeting of God and His child.

But obviously religion needs a frame, a setting.

People must know what really religious people have found out about the character of God: they must be taught to recognise the portrait of Christ together with His teaching and claims: they ought to know—though it is a more remote step—the religious history and spiritual adventures of the classical religious nation of whom and to whom Christ came, that is the record of God's gradual revelation of Himself to the Jews which is contained in the Old Testament.

Then we must teach how God is to be approached

and found ; so we must teach them how to pray and what are the external signs and inward graces of the Sacraments.

But all through our teaching will run the refrain, expressed or unexpressed, that all this is preliminary—the day must come when the prayerful soul not only receives but realises the Presence of God within it, and this and this only is the Christian religion, which blossoms out into joy and expresses itself in a loving and holy Christian life.

Even Baptism must be explained on these lines. For although the Kiss of God has rested on the soul of the unconscious infant, yet the result cannot be called religion until the dawning consciousness has realised it and consciously made it its own possession.

But where our teaching has been wrong is here. We have taught the framework as if it was the picture. We have thought that it really matters very much whether people knew the details of the history of Abraham or Jehoiada. No doubt it is good : it enlarges the philosophy or history of religion, but it doesn't really matter too much. The picture is the thing, not the framework. Is the soul united to God ? Is the man or woman a member of Christ, a child of God, a real inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven ?

So we must perfect our teaching, but only that we may lead to the unteachable. We shall educate our children in Old and New Testament history and theology : we shall teach them to pray and to join in the common worship of the Brotherhood : we shall make our Church services sublime and touching : we shall prepare them for the Sacraments ; but all for the sake of that time—sudden or imperceptible—when

the soul shall quickly or gradually open its arms to the Master and say, "Like as the hart desireth the water brooks so longeth my soul after Thee, O God." When that happens we had better steal away and leave the lovers together, for they won't want us.

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But there is a third method of winning men to a true religion. We might call it attraction. It proceeds from the influence of one personality upon another. It need not necessarily be expressed in words, it is expressed in a life, in the powerful but wordless influence of character. We all know how we are influenced by the personalities of strong people. We live next door to a convinced Liberal who is truly liberal; or we are friends with a really sane and enthusiastic Socialist. We are influenced by them even if we disagree with them: if somebody abuses their creed we find ourselves almost unconsciously defending them: in time perhaps we surrender ourselves to the same passion as animates them. It is just the same with Christians: the greatest education for non-Christians is not intellectual teaching but association with proper Christians. Their education is indeed "*literæ humaniores*," for they learn their lessons from association with human hearts and human characters.

So our best method of handing on our Christian secret is by a steady endeavour to live as in the sight of God. Others may not be convinced by your words, but they see the light which beats on you and some of it steals unconsciously into their own souls.

But your religion, if it is to influence a world, must

be majestic and large. Men watch some Christians and simply do not desire to be like them. They see that such are passionately interested in details of Christian worship: they are experts in controversy: they are ready to condemn: they label everybody with facility—such a one is Catholic, such another Protestant, such another a heretic. Or they are parochial, very interested in the success of their own Church, but supercilious about the Church of England or the Catholic Church at large.

Or again—and this is the biggest indictment—they are inhuman. They value individuals for the sake of the system and not the system for the sake of souls. They cannot see traces of God in everyone: until you have made your confession or attend your Sunday Mass you are an outsider to them, or, again, until you can say you are saved you are outside your Saviour's innermost love. We must have a religion which cares for and values every soul of man. We must care for their bodies and go all the way with the Socialist or humanitarian who demands, as a simple act of justice, fair wages and decent homes for any who are willing to work. I know, of course, that religion is not exhausted by perfect social equipment, but, equally, religion cannot tolerate social injustice any more than it can ultimately tolerate slavery. On the same grounds prostitution, or the moral slavery of women, is not to be ignored or merely regarded with horror, but must be resisted and—as far as possible—abolished.

Till we take these things seriously, serious people will not look at us. We often complain that the Labour Party—to which many of us look with such

hope—ignore the Church. But why should they do otherwise? They know the incompetences of the Church's organisation: the inequalities of service and pay in the Church: the financial excess in some parishes and the deep and enervating poverty of the spiritual organisations in others.

They know that there are "jobs" in the Church: that posts which ought to be held by energetic organisers or preachers are treated—or have been treated sometimes—as the reward of political influence or as pension-places for men whose work is done. They know that evil or incompetent parish priests cannot be got rid of except by protracted and exceptional measures.

And they know that in the betterment of the people it is not the Church that has always given the lead; she has often toiled painfully in the wake of nominal atheists or non-Churchmen.

So I reckon that our first need is a large human outlook, which demands humane treatment as well as justice for all. When we have shown our reality in this sphere, then they will be more ready to hear us in the higher spheres of religious truth. We shall tell them, and with justice, that the souls of men cannot be satisfied without the fulfilment in Christ of the primary instincts of God and goodness and immortality. We can say with truth that liberty is not mere freedom to live in comfort or to follow out our own wills, but liberty to live in harmony with the highest, i.e. with the will of God.

But until we have won our spurs in the more tangible regions of social justice and ordinary human kindness they will not listen to us. Why should they? Even

I, who am firmly embedded in the stratum of ecclesiastical life, have a horror of ecclesiastical persons.

A man who doesn't love humanity is to my mind something abnormal and even monstrous. His absorption in his system, his pride in his ritual, his pigeon-holing of everybody into their orthodox compartment, make me honestly prefer the ordinary genial kind man of the world who, if he never enters a church, at least gives his sovereign to Dr. Barnardo. "Write me as one who loves his fellow-men," would be one of my two mottoes inscribed over the lintel of every theological college and writ deep in the heart of every Christian. These young men who go out into their parishes with a kind of ecclesiastical mould into which they mean to force everybody at once, fill me with aversion. They remind me of some ogre who shoves his victims into a magic bed which decapitates the elongated, or stretches the minute until they break. Men first : system afterwards. You can love men into religion and so into their rightful heritage in the Church, you can never, by argument or sarcasm, force free men into anything.

So if you want to bring men to Christ you must attract them in, although your attraction may be unconscious to yourself and arises, not from the effort to attract, but from the intrinsic excellence of a character lived out in union with Christ.

Your qualifications are threefold : you love God, you love humanity, you understand the teaching and system of the Church. And these qualifications come in this order and in no other. Then you will attract men automatically, and when they turn to you for advice you can explain to them how God is known by

and in Christ, and how membership of the Church is membership in Christ, and therefore that the services, customs, laws, organisations, of the Church are sacred and to be observed.

But never let your Churchmanship swallow up your love for God and humanity. If so you become a mere ecclesiastic, and I know and am utterly persuaded that ecclesiastics may beget other ecclesiastics as narrow as themselves, but they will never convert a world of human people. Ecclesiastics in this sense are Churchmen without love, and without love you will never convert anybody to anything worth having.

But give me a fair number of Christians whose God is their Friend, whose Saviour is Christ, whose hearts are warm for humanity : add to these qualifications a knowledge of the Church as Christ's family and of the Church's activities and Sacraments as means of help and grace, then I will engage to show you a real revival of religion through the potent influence that a good man has on his environment, by his prayers, his spiritual and moral energies, by his Christian life.

CHAPTER VIII

SCHEMES OF REFORM

OF course I, like many others, am bursting with schemes of reform. There are, however, some dreams which, however entrancing, are at present rather remote. Such is the dream of the reunion of Christendom. I should like to have a real union with Roman Catholics and Nonconformists. Reunion between High Church and Low Church is already attained in principle (I incline to think) even though it is incomplete, and Churchmen will always vary temperamentally about ritual, and some will inevitably lay greater stress on one or other of the two essential religious factors—the grace given by God and the response of faith given by man. But when I read such a book as “The Faith of a Churchman,” written by such men as the Bishop of Peterborough and Arthur Burroughs, I can put it down with the blessed conviction that our differences are only in detail and temperament.

But Reunion with Rome seems a long way off—the Infallibility of the Pope is a solid affair and Romans honestly believe it a legacy of Christ to Peter and his successors or else a development inspired by the Spirit, while we honestly believe it to be an innovation on the Gospel, a gradual growth of time, very

human and in some ways very effective and inspiring, but no more divine or compelling than the concentration of the life of Germany into the autocratic sway of William of Hohenzollern. If people like it, let them have it: but we are at liberty to accept or reject it; and in either case we think it a human arrangement calculated to promote efficiency and no more divine than the constitution of Government in the Greek or the Russian Church.

So I leave out these dreams and concentrate on a few of the reforms which could be made effective in a year. For this purpose I even omit the great question of the separation of the Church of England from the excessive control of the State. I know that the Church of England is no mere department of State-life and that her authority as part of the Catholic Church is exercised through the Episcopate, acting constitutionally. But the State is too hampering: we are prevented by a parliament—largely non-Christian—from reforming ourselves; we know that a good many men in Parliament prefer not to see us too efficient, it wouldn't suit their book. The Bishop of Oxford expects great things from the present negotiations following the report of a Committee appointed to discuss the relations between Church and State. I hope he may be right in his hopes and single-hearted endeavours. Personally I should be a bit more reckless, not being a dignitary, and would reform the Church at any price, even if it meant cutting the painter. I would submit to see the Church of England going out—Christ-like—into the wilderness without endowments, churches, anything, rather than submit to any legislative restraints which contradicted any

essential teaching of the Church. I would burn my boats over divorce, for instance. Even about Welsh disestablishment I am prepared to see our authorities go to Mr. Lloyd George and say, "Do you on your honour as a Christian and a gentleman hold that disestablishment and partial (or total) disendowment would help Christianity in Wales." If he said "Yes, I honestly do," then I would like to see all opposition dropped and preparations made to relieve the Church of Wales by an appeal to all English-Church Christians. I should ask for five years' grace, to recover from the war, and this would not be denied in view of the splendid and patriotic conduct of Welsh Churchmen during hostilities. But I am weary of striving for privilege or even insisting on justice for ourselves. We ought to be able to take even the spoiling of our goods with equanimity. New money would be forthcoming if men saw that the Church was alive and in earnest.

However, I leave all this to the future. My own practical schemes deal mainly with the diocese, the various geographical units ruled by a single Bishop. Here is where reform must begin.

Let us take an ideal diocese and see whether it is impossible. Of course I speak humbly and under correction.

First of all the Bishop himself must be a constitutional ruler and the father of his clergy and people. He must initiate, together with his brother-Bishops, such large movements of reform as will regenerate the whole Church of England. He must be a backer-up of all social and patriotic schemes, by whomsoever initiated, as will make England free, happy and good.

But he must exist specially for his own diocese. His clergy must feel that in him they have a guardian of the Faith who will not tamper with the heritage derived from the past. He must be a witness and keeper of the Catholic faith as proved by, or agreeable to, Holy Scripture, and set out for public worship in the Book of Common Prayer. He may allow extras, at either end of the scale, but never at the sacrifice of the vast body of common matter. Our present chaotic condition is the result of want of discipline at either end. Benediction, for instance, is completely under the control of the Bishop to allow or forbid : but his authority is weakened by the fact that some of his clergy have never preached, or have actually impugned, the true position of confession and absolution, and he has approved, or not disapproved, of them. There may be variations, but there must be limits. Bishops have often tried to suppress one end alone, and the result is that the other end, naturally, revolts.

The parish priest must feel that his Bishop is not a new kind of Pope, but a constitutional ruler, who (following his Prayer Book) treats the Church of England as an authentic part of the Catholic Church of Christ, with the undoubted right to vary its non-essentials, but in bulk in complete harmony with the faith and practice of the undivided Church. Certainly there used to be a suspicion that a Bishop would trick you into accepting something less than the Catholic Faith. That can never produce anything except revolt. Then the Bishop must be his clergy's friend. My own experiences have always been happy, but I know that some clergy used to think—and still think—of their Bishop as a schoolmaster whom it is wiser to

dodge. I am sure this is as disastrous as it is antiquated. I would tell my Bishop everything and trust him. I am sure you can do it nowadays. But he must give time to his clergy and cut down most things in order to get to know them. That is the real argument for smaller dioceses: it is so superhuman to get to know seven hundred clergy, let alone congregations.

But let us grant an ideal Bishop. What is, or has been, his weakness? It is the absence of a general Staff: a war staff. Personally I don't much mind the Palaces, although—with due respect—I know that to many the residence in Palaces of the followers of the Carpenter is an anomaly. But the Palaces would be quite all right if they were Diocesan houses: tenanted by the Bishop and his Staff. I would have the Bishop tenanting a wing: the rest of the Palace might be used by the Staff; I would erect wooden huts for them in the garden if necessary. The Canonries would be tenanted by heads of departments.

You may say "What sort of Staffs?" Well, there ought to be in every diocese a staff for religious supervision and education: a staff for rescue and preventive work: a staff for missionary work both home and at the front: a staff of learning who could advise the clergy: a staff for mission-preaching, relieving overworked or tired clergy, and so on.

Where could these be better placed than round their Bishop? Take instances. A vicar reports to the Bishop that he is tired and the parish asleep. A member of the Mission Staff is despatched for a month or six weeks. During that time he gives a clear *teaching* course of twelve sermons, presenting a bird's-

eye view of the Faith to the inspiring of the congregation and the refreshment of the tired vicar.

These mission preachers of the Staff could wander round the diocese ; arousing the careless, strengthening the failing ; animating the worldly. I do not want them to be necessarily single men : but I want them to be ready to go off and spend a month wherever the line was weak.

Just see how this method is being followed to-day by an energetic Government. A Food Controller : a Controller of Shipping : a Minister of Munitions—all these emphasise that if you want efficient work done you must have one man whose whole time and energy is given to the one task.

What happens at present ? Some Bishops are beginning the scheme. I see that Mr. R. J. Campbell is appointed a Missioner for the Diocese : a very good instance of how—at last—in the Church of England the right man is appointed to the right place. I shouldn't have been surprised ten years ago to find that he had been appointed Secretary to the Waifs and Strays Society. The Bishop of Oxford has a staff also, I understand. But you would have thought that the need was obvious and imperative.

“ Money ” you will say. I'm sure money would be forthcoming : again I say it that money will always be forthcoming if men see that the Church means business.

And can we honestly say that Canonries have been used as offices for men who will devote their time to some departmental work of the diocese ? Sometimes yes. But who doesn't know of Canonries as rewards for finished men ? They have done their work here or

there : all honour to them. But they must go, they need a successor. What can we do with them : there are no adequate pensions ! (and all shame to us that it is so). Oh ! can't we get him a canonry ? So posts which are hall-marked by nature as the proper place for energetic heads of departments are sometimes given to and often held by men who are long past their prime of usefulness. Fancy if it were so in the Navy ! Imagine a Commander-in-Chief without a Staff, or fancy captains of ships of seventy-five years of age mellowing on, while the whole discipline of the Navy sank. " Ah ! but what of some wise old man, some Dean Church, who remains and thinks and pours out to the younger generation his accumulated stores of wisdom ? " Right : I grant it. Let there be one such in every Cathedral Staff : as well as one great preacher. But are the headquarters of a diocese, as a whole, organised so as to bring to bear on the diocese the greatest weight of direction and energy ?

Is a man appointed because a department has to be worked and he is the man for the job ?

Do the authorities say " We need a theologian, let us get Dr. So-and-so " ; " We need a preacher, let us ask for Mr. X " ; " We need a head of mission preaching, let us ask Z " ?

Some of this staff might be laymen, e.g. for finance ; others might be women, for rescue work. Whatever her politics I would put Miss Maude Royden at the head of the rescue work of a diocese and would know that it would be perfectly done.

But a staff ! that is what is wanted. The Palace might house some of them, the Canonries the rest. The episcopal income might help them a little, the

diocese must do the rest. It would be done by any real business organisation. *It must be done.*

After that the diocese might begin to have a life of its own. Why shouldn't it produce its own Catechism? I have lying here a "Catechism of the Diocese of Arras," sent me by somebody at the front. It is not necessarily a model, the teaching of the early narratives of Genesis is perhaps a little crude, but it certainly contains a series of lessons which exhibit the whole faith in a manner in which our excellent but too brief Catechism does not. In the Church of England Catechisms might differ a bit too sharply, but I am not sure. Even the Free Church Catechism is very good on its positive side, and I suppose most Catechisms would be positive. Out of them we might in time evolve a fuller Catechism for the Church of England. Why should not one ideal diocese make its own? Romans can do it, why not we? Or again as regards missionary work. Excellent as are the S.P.G. and C.M.S. and so on, doesn't it strike the casual observer that the foreign mission work of the Church is too big to be left entirely to voluntary societies? Or if they are so left wouldn't it be altogether advantageous if the missionary work of the Church of England were divided up and each diocese were directly responsible for part? In my ideal diocese we would have two mission fields: for I would give everybody their chance. We might take (say) Uganda and Korea. Excellent and inspiring work is being done in both. The head of the Foreign Mission department would ascertain from the Bishops of these respective sees how much money and how many men they needed. He would then organise and

collect the necessary money and men and would offer them either directly, or through the C.M.S. and the Korean association, to the Bishops for their work. Clergy from the diocese would keep before themselves the possibility of giving five years, ten years, a lifetime, to *their* mission field. Returning missionaries would find themselves welcomed back in their old dioceses and given work for which their missionary period was their best recommendation.

Of course you could not draw the line too tight : men must be free to go anywhere, and the faithful must give where they please, but if a certain portion of the mission field were the first charge on a diocese's mission energy, it would not only lead to concerted and united effort, but would be welcomed by everybody as a businesslike and sensible arrangement.

As it is, we are all anywhere. We subscribe ten shillings to Honolulu to-day and a pound to Central Africa next quarter. All sorts of sectional appeals come to us : it is Africa to-day, Asia to-morrow and Polynesia the day after. We are so confused with all that we love none, and our giving and interest are spasmodic and depend almost entirely on whether we are induced to hear the latest episcopal visitor who persuades you (in effect) to drop your subscription to Uganda and give it to Uruguay.

Couldn't this be done ? Is it more difficult than the task of the food controller ?

Again, something like it *must* be done. You can then see how many practical reforms there are which could be done. I might run through many, but I will take but one more. The diocese would have its own colleges for training its theological students and

candidates for the ministry or other work of the Church.

There would be a Cuddesdon, a Wells, a Kelham at the heart of every diocese. And why not a training school for women Church-workers also—unless you are afraid of the colleges being too near together !

Our clergy are still far too exclusively drawn from public schools and universities. A training in an office or in a mine is an excellent preparation for the ministry of souls.

What happens now ? Some, like myself, go to a public school and university at the expense of our parents. We do (or should do) a course at a theological college. But we emerge and are ordained on a minimum of experience of human hearts. What do we know of the big things, poverty, work, marriage, love, death ? We have never earned a day's pay in our life : we know nothing intimately of the lives of the vast majority of our countrymen. There are men far better than us : merchant seamen, miners, Naval officers, labour leaders, who really know what life is. Suppose they find a vocation, what do they do ? They have to resort to Canon Petit or the Archbishop for a scholarship here, and a grant there, and a subscription from somebody else : they must painfully work up Greek and waste a lot of time at the 'Varsity.

Quite honestly the best theology and most notable encouragement I have had in the last two years was from a merchant skipper whose ship tied up to us. He was excellent ; common sense, human, a sincere Christian and a deep thinker. Yet if he wanted to be ordained ? I should have to beg here and there and lead him through the shallows where the youngsters

who had just left college ruled the roost and bored him with their ecclesiastical puppyisms.

Where is the diocesan college, framed on large and bold lines, where a man with a first-class recommendation could enter to pray and prepare and learn the routine ?

We make it too hard for everybody except those who have gone through the orthodox mill of public school and university. We want some system by which a man joins up for a probationary period so that sympathetic yet discriminating authority can watch and decide whether the vocation is real. Yes, Kelham, I think : but a Kelham in every diocese, supported by the diocese, producing primarily for the diocese. Then at last we should get to business.

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So as I leave you to think over " My Ideals of Religion " (which of course aren't mine in the sense that I think that my religion is better than anyone else's, but " Mine " in the sense that it is a religion which anyone might make his own and call it " mine ") I ask you to think it all over very carefully.

You see that religion is *personal* : something of love and devotion between you and God : something of the completion of your personality by Christ : not simply a knowledge of facts or a philosophy about the world.

Once you have got it you must spread it, and I hope and pray that you will not endeavour to do so only by personal talk or effort, but will associate yourself heart and soul with those reforms which touch not

merely yourself but the Brotherhood, and will earnestly strive to make the Church of England a true, living and purified part of the Catholic Church of Christ. wherein human souls can find Christ and live in loving union with Him and each other.

CHAPTER IX

OUR IMMEDIATE PROGRAMME

I FEEL impelled to write one more chapter on the ideals which lie before us all when we contemplate the New England that is to be after the war.

Are we Churchmen, clergy and laity, the real people to blame for our past ineffectiveness? I wonder especially whether we clergy are futile or not? It puzzles me so. A short time ago a candid midshipman gave me his ideas on the subject, and though his criticisms were grotesque to me who have been nearly always fortunate in my clerical friends, I wondered whether they had any truth in them. "Curates," he said, "are a hopeless class. You pay them a wage which no really capable person would accept and set them down to visit old women and dole them out relief—work which could be far better done by women. Nobody but a fanatic would do such work for such pay, and fanatics are useless persons." I tried to show that there were objects that we thought worth pursuing in spite of the inadequate and uneven "pay and prospects," objects so important that we reckoned that a man's life was well spent in poverty if they could be even partially attained. He departed, saying that there was certainly something in what I said, but that he hadn't come across these ideas before. And

I sat and wondered whether he was more right than I had ever realised. I have thought in terms of Stanton or Dolling or Dean Church : I think of living friends of mine in Coventry or Holborn, or in the country places of Warwickshire and Worcestershire : men whom I am proud to know, and honour as much or more than any layman I have ever met. But dreadful visions crossed my mind of anæmic "curates" with well-meaning faces arriving at parishes to be ushered into a life of soup-tickets and mothers' meetings, interspersed with a series of "a few words," and the whole thing tame and unvirile. Do they exist and I don't know it ? Are there men who have no words hot from God, no message to proclaim, no characters to build, no Kingdom of God to people with healthy souls ? Is my midshipman right ? Honestly, I haven't met many such. I wandered the other day into Durham. Coming from a well-known ship I found myself inveigled into addressing a meeting of students on "Our programme." A large number of young clergy were there, and since then I have been in touch with a good many of them. Were they relief-dolers and nonentities ? I found them sturdy and serious : full of schemes : ready to tackle miners and steel-workers : dead-keen on building the Church of God in the North. They converted me, I confess : my future ideals drag me North ; any man might be proud to serve with such men. I think I can put their ideal into words, for it is my own. Let me say what we intend for England. First of all let me speak out my heart about the Church of England. It is like England : sound in heart but untidy in method. When the War came it found England unready, un-

scientific, disputing over non-essentials, unorganised, unvoiced. No single or clear voice inspired us, we were ruled by babel. Our politicians were clever and versatile ; but they sounded no trumpet to awake the glorious master-passions of our souls. Now we know better, thank God.

So with the Church. It may be muddled and untidy, but it is sound at heart. No doubt there has been too much acceptance of a congregation as the limit of effort, a sphere adequate to a man's powers. I deny that. We must leave our congregations, in a sense, in order to find the sheep in the wilderness. We must convert them enough to make them fellow-missionaries with us, and then say, " Look out for yourselves to a large extent : do not exhaust us by making us spend too much time on you. You ought to be finished, or nearly finished. You ought to know God for yourselves now, and be helpers to others, not mere consumers of what ought to be spent in converting the world. Come out into the open, forget yourselves, help us to rebuild the Kingdom of God in Britain and the world." There has been too much parochialism, too little vision, yet the Church of England is at heart sound, and able to deliver a mighty message yet. And what is the message, the programme with which we confront the world ? Are we to waste all our time in the old sickening controversies between " High Church " and " Low Church " ?

These will tend to disappear amid the sweat and dust of work done honestly side by side. If a Low Churchman sees that the best advocate of righteousness in the city makes his communion daily or goes to confession from time to time, he will soon enlarge

his ideas of Churchmanship. If the Catholic finds that the most sweeping reformer in the Town Council is a Low Church minister or a converted Nonconformist worker, he too will enlarge his ideas as to the channels which God uses for His holy purposes : there will still be differences, there will be no bitterness or feud. No : our programme is positive. We can put it in a text. We are out for nothing else than

“ The glorious liberty of the children of God.”

That liberty is threefold. We include all three parts in our programme. Infinite harm has been done by neglecting any of the three.

First : the liberty of the bodies of men.

We mean to fight and work until every Englishman (and ultimately any citizen of the world) has the means and opportunities, if he be willing to work, for making his life worth living.

That is our formula, “ Life worth living for everybody.” We start with fair wages. Every man who labours shall have adequate pay. We have no objection to any employer getting rich : the richer the better if the riches are well spent. But no man shall get rich until his employees receive enough to make life worth living ; there shall be no more sweated labour. We go on to decent homes. There shall be no slums. No cottages with one w.c. to four houses, as was reported in a provincial paper last week. I’m not sure we shall not issue licences to employers to employ and to landlords to be landlords. If they do not fulfil the conditions of the licence, it will be cancelled and the State will sell or take over the business

or the property, without hesitation or remorse. Justice before leniency. Then there must be good conditions of labour : no foul air, or dangerous conditions ignored, no bullying of girls by foremen or others in authority. (This goes on : I know a good deal about it.) Then there must be honest means of recreation for everybody. Open spaces, recreation grounds, proper public places of entertainment, perhaps bands and music to be provided in many places. England must be Merrie England again. There must be a stern effort to reclaim women from prostitution, which is a slavery of their bodies and souls to their own foolishness and to the lusts of men.

All these come under the head of "Liberty of the body," and are all part of a Churchman's job, whether he be lay or cleric. We have neglected our duty here, and the result is that men rightly scoff at our other claims. "If you have not loved the body you can see, how can ye love the soul ye cannot see?" they say to us bitterly. And rightly. Body and soul are one, and the justice of God demands that we should heal the disorders of the body while also seeking to save the soul.

Secondly: the liberty of the mind.

We demand true education for everybody. All honest knowledge and research is from God. The mind is God's endowment. Instead, therefore, of fussing only about religious teaching, we must demand the best sort of education that each sort of mind can absorb. True history : sound science : inspiring literature : ennobling art and music, are the mind's right, and the soul's educators. The education authorities—from the Minister of Education down-

wards—ought to find in us their most hearty co-operators, and I am quite sure that if this were so, we should soon attain the ideal of our religious education—the right of each child to be taught (under the best conditions) the religion of its parents. I honestly think that the headmaster of a Council School should find in his parish priest and in the Church laity of his district his best friends and his most enthusiastic supporters.

Surely in a generous and large-hearted country we do not want the enjoyments and refinements of education limited to one class. Already in the North, the worker appreciates first-class music as much as any person in England. The “education of a gentleman” need not be confined to the well-to-do; true education will put all those treasures of the mind or of taste which make for refinement and beauty, within the reach of all who are capable of using and enjoying them.

So a part of our programme consists in a keen campaign for the true liberty of human minds.

Thirdly: the liberty of the soul.

We shall, however, insist that to supply all the right instincts of the body and the mind is not enough. If the soul is ignored the personality will be starved and stunted. What are the instincts of the soul? Here we are back on familiar ground; they are the instincts after God, goodness and immortality, to be found in the ordinary run of mankind. What is going to feed them adequately? Religion. And the fullest satisfaction and the only adequate food is to be found in the Christian religion: union with Christ.

This last point we shall have to show and prove ; that is our job : To show in our lives and persuade by our words that in Christ alone does the human soul find not only light and truth, but expands healthily into the old and blessed fruits of love, joy and peace.

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Here then is our programme. It is a difficult one but not impossible, and at least it is inspiring.

We stand side by side with all those true souls in Britain who are out for the betterment of the people. We shall co-operate with all who are forwarding the liberty which human bodies and minds can rightly claim, and that, not in a grudging spirit as if it were time wasted, but with happy and honest zeal, because it is part of our own Christian programme. And having done all this honestly, we shall have earned the right to push the rest of our programme, the right of the soul to have its own freedom in God.

To me it is a most glorious programme : it is an ideal worth one's life. Nothing pettifogging, nor carping ; no waste of any considerable time on minor points, or matters of lesser detail ; but a noble comprehensive scheme which aims at the emancipation and true liberty of men and women, and makes them free from top to bottom. It surrounds them with an atmosphere of a liberty which extends from the smallest details of their home life to the most sacred harmonies and aspirations of their souls.

Christ came to set us free, we say. True : that is our message. Let us preach it and live it as something

majestic : let us live and work on a grander scale than before, as befits guardians of so uplifting a truth. Let us be leaders of liberty for mankind that we may help to destroy the works of the devil and make men sons of God and heirs of eternal life.

APPENDIX

Two days after I wrote the last chapter but one of this book, the "Church Times" of January the 19th, 1917, published the appended letter from Bishop Furse. I am taking the liberty of quoting it in its entirety, as it is a great comfort to me to feel that I am not simply crying for impossibilities, but am unconsciously following in the wake of pioneers and real practical Church reformers.

THE MISSION AND THE MISSIONS

SIR,—What we hear of the National Mission, in spite of its critics, fills us with hope. If it were a purely domestic affair it might possibly be thought impertinent of anyone from overseas making any suggestions with regard to it, but this corporate effort is surely much more than that? It is surely in a very real sense our concern as well as yours?

May I therefore suggest that one of the matters which cannot be left out of account is the attitude of the Church of England towards its Catholic and therefore world-wide responsibilities to new countries and to child races. Is the Church of England going to claim its share of the responsibilities of the Catholic Church of Christ or is it going to be content to be merely an insular sect? If the former, then I submit

she must get busy about tackling this question as a whole without delay. She must see to it that those portions of "the Front" which are primarily hers are supplied with adequate "man-power" and "munitions of war." She must take the whole world-wide campaign into her purview as one—home and overseas. At any given moment she has only a certain supply of "man-power" and "munitions" available; this supply must be used to the best advantage for winning the war as a whole; she must be in a position to be able to use it thus. At present she is obviously not in a position to do anything of the kind. That would not matter so much if there were any real sign that she realised the necessity of getting into such a position.

As far as we can see overseas the idea of such a thing has hardly begun to germinate except in the minds of a few scattered individuals. And so we go on from year to year, living from hand to mouth, without discipline, plan or policy. Everyone does just as he pleases, goes or doesn't go, and mostly doesn't; while bishops at home and overseas continue to compete for "man-power" and "munitions" in that exciting but rather exhausting game of "catch-who-catch-can," and it's all glorious fun, but it is not *War*. Anyone who will take the trouble to study the relative condition of things at home and overseas, together with the relative number of clergy and workers employed and the relative amount of money spent in those respective parts of the one campaign (especially on those fronts which are face to face with heathenism), will readily see how ridiculous the present state of things is.

Now, is the National Mission going to tackle this most fundamental question, or is it going to leave it as it is, content with general exhortations to the faithful to be more zealous for " Foreign Missions " ? " Foreign " forsooth ! Is there any hope—surely there is—that one result of this corporate effort will be the creation of some sort of " General Staff " which will sit down and tackle this question instead of leaving it to be tackled by a few already overworked bishops and clergy in those spare moments which never come ?

MICHAEL FURSE

(Bishop of Pretoria).

BISHOPKOP, JOHANNESBURG,

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